

THE  
F O L L Y,  
<sup>K</sup>  
SIN, and DANGER  
OF  
Marrying *WIDOWS*,  
AND  
*Old Women* in GENERAL,  
DEMONSTRATED;  
And earnestly address'd to the  
BACHELORS of *Great Britain*.

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*By a True Penitent.*

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Printed for J. ROBINSON, at the *Golden-Lion*  
in *Ludgate-street*.

[Price SIX-PENCE.]

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SOCIAL Love, or a tender Regard for the Happiness of our Fellow-creatures, is a Principle implanted by Nature in almost every human Breast. Some, indeed, possess, it in a greater Degree than others, and here and there we find a Monster in a human Form, who appears an utter Stranger to it. For my own Part, I am really conscious of this generous Principle in myself, and I desire the Reader to believe that I am solely induced to publish the ensuing Pages, by a laudable Ambition of doing good.

I have myself been married to an Old Woman, and what is yet worse, a Widow ;

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but, I thank God, my Wife died a few Weeks ago. As I have been a great Sufferer by being thus matched, or rather mismatched, my Compassion for all others in the like unhappy Circumstance, is naturally and sincerely excited. It is true, I am incapable of contributing much to the Relief of those who are already plunged into that dreadful Gulph, out of which I am so happily emerged, but I have great Hopes that my charitable Endeavours may prevent many who are yet safe, from precipitating themselves into the same unfortunate Condition: And as my private Situation in the World limits my Opportunities for serving my Country within very narrow Bounds, what greater Good can I do in my Generation, than by pointing out to unwary Travellers the hidden Pit of Destruction, warning them of the Danger of going near it, and directing them to a safer Path?

Marriage undoubtedly was at first designed to keep Mankind in a State of Sobriety, Virtue, and (by an inseperable Consequence) Happiness, as far as Happiness in this Life can be attained to; but in this, as in all other Institutions capable of being perverted by the Depravity of Man, such Corruptions have been introduced, that it



is now brought into Disgrace and Contempt, and made the Subject of Ridicule amongst People of all Ranks and of both Sexes; such only excepted, who have Wisdom enough to separate the Thing itself from the Abuses which are crept into it.

Of these Abuses and Corruptions, the unnatural Conjunction of a Young Man and an Old Woman is certainly the Chief; as I shall plainly demonstrate by the incontestible Evidence of Examples and Facts, amongst which my own unhappy Case will have no small Weight with the unprejudiced Reader.

But, before I proceed to illustrate the Truth of my Assertion, by the melancholy Instances which I shall produce, I will offer a few general Arguments to prove the Folly, Sin, and Danger of a Young Man's marrying an Old Woman whether Maid or Widow; and more especially the great Danger of *any* Man's marrying a Young Widow.

I take it for granted that all my Christian Readers believe a universal Providence: I say my Christian Readers, because I do not write to the Infidels of this Age, who are not to be reasoned with, having shewn themselves great Enemies to Rationality, as well as to Faith. Now a universal

Providence must necessarily extend to Individuals, as every Individual makes a Part of the whole System of created Beings; for if all the Parts are not preserved, what then must become of the Whole?

The Superintendence of a Providence over the Affairs of Men being allowed, let us enquire whether this Providence does not, in some Measure, punish the Vicious, and reward the Virtuous, even in this Life; and thereby fix and maintain the Ballance of Good and Evil in the moral World.

I hope no one who is Master of but a moderate Share of Reason and Experience, will deny that the wise and virtuous Man, the Man whose Actions are governed by just and generous Principles, who avoids all the Evil, and does all the Good that he can, is more favoured by God, and revered by Man, than he who indulgeth himself in vicious Passions, and walks in the Paths of Wickedness and Folly: This is what every body may have observed: I never knew a sensible Person far advanced in Years, who was not absolutely assured, by the many Instances he had known, that Vice and Virtue are their own Reward, even in this Life. It is true a Case may sometimes present itself to our View, seemingly the Reverse of what has been said; but

but all such, if carefully enquired into, and truly, will be found in the End, to be only stronger Proofs in favour of our Argument.

How often do we see Persons eminent for their Piety or Morals, flourishing, to use *David's* Simile, like a green Tree planted by the River's Side! Their Characters admired, their Virtues revered, their Persons loved, their Friendship courted: They live with Satisfaction to themselves, and die in the fulness of their Honours, lamented by all, and their Memories transmitted with Blessings to latest Posterity.

On the other Hand, we ever find the dishonest Fool, the worldly-minded ungenerous Soul, and the wicked Reprobate, despised and hated not only by their betters, but even by those who are as bad as themselves: And tho' for a while they may deceive the World, and seem to prosper, yet an evil Fate, or, in other Words, the Hand of Providence, is sure to overtake them at last: In their Lives they are perpetually haunted and harrassed by their own Consciences, and tho', perhaps, abounding in Riches, they starve amidst their Plenty, not having the Power to enjoy any earthly Good they possess, being conscious of their own Demerits, and dread-  
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ing the Approach of that avenging Cal-  
tastrophe, which seldom fails to fall on  
them e'er they can take Sanctuary in their  
Graves.

I doubt not but every sensible Reader  
will allow the above Observations to be  
just, and if they are just, they are suf-  
ficient to prove that Man in his general  
Commerce with his Fellow-creatures, gains  
Pleasure and Profit, Pains and Losses, in  
Proportion to the wise or foolish, virtuous  
or vicious Tenor of his Conduct.

If then the over-ruling Hand of Pro-  
vidence extends its Dispensations to the  
grand Concerns of human Life, Marriage,  
as one of the Principal, if not absolutely  
the most Important, having an immediate  
Tendency to the Improvement or De-  
struction of human Happiness, is surely  
intituled to its peculiar Care: And that  
Providence actually does govern and di-  
rect Mankind in this as well as all other  
important Concerns, is palpably evident  
from the Consequences ever attending E-  
vents of this Kind.

According to the sacred Laws of Ma-  
trimony, as established by the all-wise Au-  
thor of Nature, the principal Motive, the  
chief Inducement for entering into that  
State, is a mutual Affection between the  
Parties,



Parties, supremely over-ruling all other Considerations: Which Affection is to be regulated by a prudent Foresight, and a strict Regard to the Preservation and Improvement of each others Happiness, abstracted from the meer Gratifications of Love. Let us now see what it is that naturally excites this Affection in the Mind. — It is certainly nothing else than Youth, Beauty, or Virtue on the one Side, and Vigour, Comeliness, good Sense, and Generosity on the other. It is by these, or certain other Endowments, generally incompatible with old Age, that either Sex is naturally excited to Love the other, and to desire that mutual Intercourse called Matrimony; and all Motives for engaging in such an Intercourse which are foreign to these, are monstrous Violations of the great Laws of Nature: Those Laws which are prescribed to us by God himself, the Author of all Things, and which only tend to make Mankind virtuous, wise, and happy. Consequently whatever Actions we commit, contrary to such Laws, are contrary to the Scheme and Conduct of God's providential Government of the World, and therefore Merits his Displeasure; and whatever we do to Merit his Displeasure, is undoubtedly a Sin, and whatever is Sin, he

he certainly punishes even in this Life.\* I will illustrate this by instancing one kind of Punishment which frequently lights on those who enter into the sacred Bands from unrighteous Motives, *viz.*

A young Fellow of small Fortune is very desirous of enlarging it; and while he endeavours to attain to this imaginary Happiness, he voluntarily, tho' unwarily slights the Pursuit of every real and substantial Enjoyment. Thus, instead of applying himself to Trade or Business of any Kind, or endeavouring to obtain some profitable Post in the Service of his King and Country, the only Methods by which a wise Man would think of encreasing his Fortune, he makes it his chief Care to find out some silly Old Woman, no Matter how ugly, ill-natur'd, or vicious she be, provided she be but rich. Such a Female must undoubtedly be in herself disagreeable to a Young Man, and stands but a poor Chance of finding him a good Husband: This the ill-

\* Here the Reader, to save a Repetition of the same Remarks, is desired to apply what has been already said, concerning virtuous and vicious Men in their general Conduct; for the same Conclusions are to be made with Regard to the Conduct of those who marry from the laudable Impulses of Nature, and those who do the same Thing from political and fordid Views.

ill-fated Youth in his own Conscience knows very well, yet foolishly, wickedly, and in direct Disobedience to the Voice of Nature in his own Breast, marries her, for the Sake of her Wealth, tho' the very Moment the Knot is tied, he looks on her as an Incumbrance upon the new Estate he has acquired, and a necessary Evil, instead of a social Companion, and the sweetner of his Life.

But mark the Consequence. Heaven provoked at so monstrous a Breach in the Order of Nature, will not suffer the Criminals to escape unpunished, but resolves to make them Examples of its Justice and Judgment, thereby to deter others from the like Offence. For this Purpose the offending Youth is abandoned to the destructive Impulses of his own Passions. He is no longer the Object of God's providential Care, but is given up to the Mercy of his worst Enemy, his own self. He now finds that the Happiness which he sought by Marrying, is not yet in his Possession ! It is true he has Wealth, but he wants every other Satisfaction. He loaths the Embraces, the Conversation, the Presence of his Wife, and goes in search of those Gratifications abroad, which it is impossible he should find at Home. He now

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gives

gives a Loose to every inordinate Desire, revels in the pestilential Arms of the Harlot, in the poisonous Delights of the Bottle, and in the ruinous Diversions of the Gaming-table; till at length, his Health, his Wealth, his Reputation being destroy'd, and nothing left him but Poverty and Contempt, he applies himself to infamous Practices for a wretched Subsistence: In this perhaps he succeeds, lives and dies abhorred and despised by all; or he fails in his Attempts, and perishes in a Jail, or on a Tree.

This is but one Method, out of many which are visible to the diligent Observer, whereby Providence dispenses its Judgments on Criminals of this Sort. As every Tree is best known by its Fruit, so the Sinfulness of these unnatural Conjunctions, is most apparently discovered by their Consequences. The divine Justice which never suffers them to prosper, is alone sufficient to demonstrate, without the help of any verbal Argument, that they are contrary to the Scheme and Conduct of God's Government of the World.

Matrimony entered into from any other Inducement, than that of a sincere and tender Passion, an Affection which is purely and simply fixed on the Person, abstracted from all Considerations of Wealth, &c. is



no better than meer Fornication. . He that marries meerly for the Sake of Money, or any Convenience of that Sort, cannot properly be said to have married a Wife, but a Bag of Money, a Piece of Parchment, &c. and therefore he is still without a Wife, in the strict and true Sense of the Word, and the Woman that he keeps may lawfully (so far as the Thing only regards the nominal Husband) make him a Cuckold, without committing Adultery : For all the Crime which can reasonably be imputed to her on that Score, seeing she is not yet married, is but Fornication at the worst ; and even that not so blameable as in a single Woman, because she has been betrayed, and tied to a Man who only stands in the Place of a Husband without being really such ; and who has wickedly deprived her of all Opportunities of disposing of herself in a Manner more suitable to what may constitute her Happiness.

When I sat down to write this little Tract, I intended to have made use of several other Arguments in Favour of my Hypothesis ; but I now look upon what I have said as sufficient to prove the sinfulness of a Young Man's marrying an Old Woman ; unless we are to suppose that he is in Love with her Person and natural

Accomplishments, without any further Regard to her Fortune than what he is obliged to by the Rules of that prudent Foresight, which I have already laid down as the regulator of our Affections: But that this can frequently, if ever happen, is such an Absurdity as I do not think it worth while to take any further Notice of.

If then what has been said, is sufficient to prove the Sinfulness of such a Conjunction, it will be unnecessary to add any Thing concerning the Folly and Danger of such a Proceeding; for every one will grant, without the least Hesitation, that it is the Height of Folly in any Man to commit a sinful Action, since such Actions are indisputably attended with inevitable Danger, both to his present and future Happiness.

With regard to the Widows, I shall easily prove the Danger to which Men are exposed, by entering into Matrimony with them, and, consequently, the Folly of such a Junction, especially on the Part of the Man.

Man is naturally tenacious of the Rights of the Marriage Bed, and that another should share those Rights with him, is what he cannot bear the Thoughts of. And so far has this natural Delicacy the Ascendant over the Heart and Reason of Man, that

that he loses half his Relish for the Enjoyment of such Rights, in the Person of a Widow, by the Reflection of their having been heretofore possessed by another. And though a Widow should preserve her Fidelity to a second Husband ever so religiously, yet still the Man will never have that tender Affection for her which he might have had, if she had never before been married. He that Weds a Relict, considers her but as a Relict ; a second-hand Commodity, and certainly in some Respects worse for the Wear : And indeed, it would be highly absurd for any one to set so great a Value upon any second-hand Piece of Household Furniture, as he would if it were new ; because he knows not how it may have been used, nor what secret Cracks, Flaws, or Stains it may have received by the Carelessness and ill Usage of the former Possessor.

If I am to purchase a Horse, I can mount the Saddle, and walk, trot, pace, or gallop the Creature, in order to form a Judgment of its Motions and Properties before-hand. If a Mare hath been ill broke when a Colt, or any Ways spoiled by the Ignorance or Boisterousness of the first Rider ; if she hath been over-hackney'd, jaded, founder'd ; or hath any latent Distemper,

stempers, occasioned by the Carelessness or foul Play of the Seller, or any other former Proprietor ; yet, in such Cases, if I have any Skill in Horses, I shall discover the Imperfections before I pay my Money, and am still at Liberty to seek further, till I can suit myself to my Liking : But it is not so with Widows. *Solomon* says, “ The “ Hearts of Kings are unsearchable ; ” and he might have added, that the Hearts of Widows are unsearchable too : But *Solomon*, probably, was not much acquainted with this incomprehensible Sort of Females, for he who might have furnished half his Subjects with his own Leavings, could have but little Occasion for those of other Men.

Of all the Variety of Female Disguises, the Wiles of the Widow are the most intricate. Her deep Dissimulation, her artful Appearances, are by far an Over-match for all the Wisdom and Policy of Man ; who may as well pretend to Fathom and discern the Depth and Bottom of the Ocean, as to Form a right Judgment of the true Character of a Widow, whilst she remains in the State of Widowhood.

*Dramantbe*, whilst a Maid, was good-natured, generous, free, and withal extremely sober. Being married to a most indulgent



indulgent Husband,\* she becomes acquainted with half the tattling Gossips in the Neighbourhood, and then her good Nature is changed into Censoriousness, her Generosity to a foolish Profusion, lavishing half her Husband's Income upon idle Tale-bearers, secret Confidants, and in expensive Visits; her Frankness degenerates into an unbounded Licentiousness of Conversation, and all Appearances of Female Modesty are quite laid aside, especially in her private Cabals; and in fine, her sober Inclinations and Manners are turned into Voluptuousness, and the Cordial Comforts of the Bottle are her *summum Bonum*. Where are now those Maiden Virtues which first captivated her Husband? Alas! they are no longer to be found in *Dramantbe*. In vain does the poor Man grieve at his Disappointment, the evil admits of no Remedy but Death. At last, this only Remedy appears, but instead of administering to the Cure of *Dramantbe*, leaves her for a Punishment to some other ill-fated Mortal, and carries off her Husband, to introduce him into a State, in which the Evils of Matrimony

\* A late eminent Packer near the *Royal Exchange, London*. The Character here given of her Wife, is a faithful Copy of the original, and his History literally true.

trimony are unknown, as the Comforts of it are not wanted.

Let us now view *Dramantbe* a Widow. She now resumes her natural Character, at least in Appearance resumes it, and seems all Virtue, all Piety, all Tenderneſs. Theſe borrowed Charms, added to the Allurements of Ten thouſand Pounds Sterling, ſoon procured her another Huſband,\* who in leſs then twelve Months after his Marriage, would gladly have given Twenty thouſand Pounds to have been rid of her. She again betakes herſelf to her Goſſips and her Bottle. This opens the Eyes of the new Huſband, and almoſt breaks his Heart into the Bargain. He ſaw, by the freſh Discoveries which every Day produced, that *Dramantbe*, tho' a young Woman, was an old Hypocrite, and a grievous Offender againſt the Rules of Female Sobriety and Decorum. However, he is not without Hopes of reclaiming her by his tender Behaviour and cordial Advice. For this Purpoſe he expoſtulates with her, intreats her with Tears, tries every Inducement that might poſſibly prevail with her to come to a Reformation. But his Endeavours were fruitleſs : She only takes Occaſion to quarrel

\* Mr. D—— a Merchant on T—— or H——ll.

quarrel with him, sheds a few Tears, and that very Evening visits some of her Confidants, the Repositories of her Secrets, and Sisters in Iniquity; to whom she relates what had passed betwixt herself and her Husband. These Agents of Female Corruption hereupon, counsel her to persevere in the pious Paths they had led her into; and, of all Things in the World, not to let her Husband incroach upon her Prerogatives, or any Ways restrain her from what she, in her own Prudence, should think fit to do. Thus advised and encouraged, the next Time Mr. D—— took Notice to her of her imprudent Conduct, she assured him roundly, that, “Truly, she  
 “knew how to govern herself as well as  
 “he did. That her first Husband would  
 “never have behaved with so much ill  
 “Nature and ill Manners towards her;  
 “and, in fine, that she would not be  
 “controlled by him.” This reprobate Answer drew a rough Reply from Mr. D—— and mutual Reproaches presently filled the whole House with Clamour and Confusion; and after that Day not a civil Word, or a charitable Look passed betwixt them. She now frets and grieves immoderately, and as immoderately steeps her Sorrows in the consoling Dram-glass: Till at last, the Husband, exasperated to the highest Degree,

D

gree,

gree, exerts his Authority, confines her at Home, and absolutely forbids all her Female Acquaintance, except such as he approved, to come near her. His next Care was to confine her to a moderate use of the Bottle; at the same Time, though he never had loved her, he behaved with the utmost Respect towards her, and took great Care to conceal her Weakness from publick Notice. But this Sort of Treatment would not do with her. Being deprived of all Correspondence with her old Associates, she meanly commences an Intimacy with a Man Servant in the House, whom she bribes and employs to fetch and carry Letters, Spirituous Liquors, &c. And when her Money failed, she scrupled not to give him Plate, Rings, and such Things, to Pawn and Sell to supply her vicious Excesses. By these Means the Fellow becoming Master of all her Secrets and Foibles, took Advantage from them, and, as Opportunities occurred, improved the Authority he had thus gained over her, to such a Height of Insolence and Wickedness, as to invade his Master's Bed. He made his first Attempt upon her, at a Time when she was already overcome by her Liquor, and consequently incapable of resisting him so much as perhaps she might have done had she been sober. Having succeeded



succeeded once, the Fellow found but little Difficulty in repeating his Crime ; and at length grew so careless in concealing it, that his Master discovered the infamous Intrigue. Mr. D—— being, however, a Man of great Prudence, took an Opportunity of quarrelling with the Fellow upon some other Occasion, and turned him off, without ever letting him know his main Reason for so doing. After this Mr. D—— perceiving that his Wife had absolutely lost all Sense of Virtue or Decency, resolved to let her take her full Swing at the Bottle, but still kept her closely confined, under Pretence of some Disorder in her Intellects: This Conduct had its desired Effect, for she soon drank herself to Death, to the great Joy of the now happy Mr. D——.

Almost every *English* Widow, in some Degree resembles *Dramantbe*. 'Tis true, they are not all guilty of Drunkenness, or Adultery ; nay, perhaps not above one in fifty are chargeable with such monstrous Vices, but I may safely venture to affirm, that most of them are degenerated from the virtuous Simplicity and Innocence of their Virgin State. This may be derived from several Causes, of which the following are the chief.

I. A Virgin who marries a Man meerly from the Impulses of Love, or hath ever

been brought to love her first Husband with a natural and sincere Tenderneſs, even though ſhe might but ſlightly regard him before Marriage, will never have that lively Affection for a ſecond Husband; which ſhe had for the firſt; nor will her Behaviour to her ſecond, attract his Love and Tenderneſs in ſo great a Degree by far, as her firſt, perhaps, expreſs'd towards her; or as the ſecond might probably have ſhewn, had he been the firſt.

II. A Woman may have been too much indulged and gratified by a firſt Husband, in all the Exceſſes of her Paſſions; and, as the common Phraſe is, *having her own Way* in every thing. Now a ſecond Husband may neither be ſo youthful nor ſo fond as the firſt; and, conſequently will not be ſo paſſive, indulgent, complying; ſo prejudiced in Favour of her Perſon, or ſo blind to her Foibles.

III. During the Life of her firſt Husband, or during her Widowhood, a Woman may have contracted ſuch Acquaintance with tattling Wives, and buxom Widows, as may very much viciate her Converſation and Manners. Great Numbers of married Women and Widows, when in Company with thoſe of their own Sex and Claſs, give ſuch a Loosè to their Thoughts and Words, as greatly tends to the

the Corruption of each other; rendering their Conceptions gross, their Deportment masculine and immodest, and too frequently raising and nourishing such Passions and Desires, as, when carried but to the lowest Degree of Excess, are utterly inconsistent with those Appearances they put on in the Presence of the Men. Add to this the Tricks, the Stratagems, the Pranks, in which they industriously instruct each other; their several Rehearsals of the Methods by which they have managed, or are to manage their past, present, or future Husbands, so as to make the poor Men lose the Use of half their Senses\*; their Declamations in Praise of good Living, the Virtues of the Vine, and the Consolations of the Dram; their Receipts for Washes, Cordials, Abortion, Fainting-Fits, Paint, &c. &c. — These Accom-

\* Every Husband who is absolutely managed or governed by his Wife, may be said to have lost the proper Use of half his Senses; his Sight, his Hearing, nay his very Feeling being at her Disposal. If she be a Drunkard, he looks upon her as a very sober Woman; if an idle, chattering, giddy, censorious Fool, she's the sharpest, cleverest Woman! — If a stupid, unconvertible Hum-drum, she's a very prudent, in-offensive Body; if she love a Gallant by the by, and this never so apparently, she's, nevertheless, the very Pink of Chastity; if a termagant scolding Fury, she's an excellent Housewife, and the most careful Manager in the World, &c. &c. &c.



Accomplishments, indeed, are but Trifles, compared with what I have heard asserted of their private Cabal Entertainments. But I shall not take upon me to particularize what I will not affirm, as I know such Things only by hearsay; and am willing to speak as favourably of this Part of the Sex, as is consistent with Justice, temper'd with Compassion.

These are the principal Causes of the Degeneracy of the Widow, from that Purity of Manners, those Virtues and Graces, which Men so much admire in the Maid; and from these Considerations it is, that I would inspire my young Countrymen with so just a Sense of their Liberty and real Happiness, as not to think Riches and Grandeur worth their Acceptance, if necessarily clogg'd with the Incumbrance of a Widow. What is a great Fortune worth, if it will not produce those solid Satisfaction, which we generally find the Mechanick, and the Country Farmer possess'd of? People of these Classes seldom marry from ambitious or sordid Views. The youthful Rustic never thinks of Matrimony, till some tight buxom Lass, nearly his Equal in Age and other Circumstances, has inspired him with that Passion, which Nature has given us to direct our Choice, and then he looks for no greater Happiness than  
what



what he expects to find in her Arms; trusting to the Blessing of Providence on his Industry, for every other Enjoyment. Hence it is, that *Dick* and *Susan* are happy in each other, while young *Traffick* the Cit, and *Papilio* the Courtier, the one wedded to a rich Widow, the other to an old maiden Lady of great Fortune, are both as miserable as two hated but eternal Companions can make them.

Young Widows are universally accused of more Wantonness than other Women. I could produce many Quotations from Authors ancient and modern, who have taken Notice of this. But not to swell my Book beyond its intended Bulk, I shall only cite the Observation made by the great Apostle *Paul*, after whom any other Authority would be superfluous.

In this Apostle's first Epistle to *Timothy*\*, he thus cautions the young Bishop against them, *But the younger Widows refuse, for when they have begun to wax wanton, they will marry; having Damnation, because they have cast off their first Faith.† And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from House to House; and*  
not

\* Chap. v. ver. II, &c.

† Query. Whether the Apostle does not mean their Faith to their first Husband; if so, then the Context plainly intimates, that a Christian Widow is never to marry a second Time.

*not only idle, but Tattlers also, and Busybodies, speaking Things which they ought not.* Now, if the Widows in the Days of *Paul*, and in those Countries where Women are, and ever have been kept in so much Restraint, deserved to be thus characterized, what would the Apostle think of our *English* libertine Dowagers, who know no Laws but their own Passions, no Restraint but the Limits of their Fortunes?

A Wantonness of Inclination, is what I believe few Men value in a Wife, unless confined within the Bounds of Moderation. Now whether the wanton Widow has her Inclinations curbed and moderated by a second Marriage, is what I will not presume absolutely to decide: However, if the experienced Reader should hesitate upon the Point, I will freely cast my own private Opinion, founded upon melancholly Experience, into the negative Scale, which may perhaps suffice to determine his Judgment.

After all, if any Man shall still think the rich old Woman, or the younger Widow preferable upon the whole, to the young Virgin with little or no Fortune, tho', the former hath no personal Charms to recommend her, and the latter be rich enough in the Endowments of Nature and Education,

cation, let such an one take his Old Woman, or his Widow, and may God bless them together, if it be possible. — In some Cases, tho' such but seldom appear, I grant the Young Man, and the Old Woman or Widow, may marry together, and do very well. The Widow may happen to be Mistress of many Female Accomplishments, and may therefore make some worthy necessitous Youth happy, but let her not think herself good enough for a Man of Fortune. The Old Woman may also have her peculiar native Endowments still about her, and flourishing in an uncommon Degree, tho' in the Autumn, or Winter of her Days; and these whither'd Beauties may possibly strike the Heart of some honest dull Fellow, whose Taste is not over delicate, and they may come together well enough, without any very bad Consequences: Tho', by the Way, no great Good can probably ensue; especially if it be considered, that a venerable Matron with one Foot in the Grave, ought rather to employ the short Remainder of her Days in preparing for another World, than to think of solacing herself in the youthful Pastimes of *Venus*.

But, as Examples will be more apt to strike with Conviction, those who may yet be unconvinced by the preceding Arguments, I will conclude all with a Recital of my own Misconduct in the very Instances which I have been condemning, and one or two other Examples which happened within the Compass of my own Acquaintance.

When I first began to think of Matrimony, I was Journeyman to one of his Majesty's Apothecaries,

thecaries, to whom I had served an Appretice-  
 ship. The Object of my Affections was a Patient,  
 the youngest Daughter of a Gentleman, who  
 having several other Children, and but a  
 narrow Fortune, could not give her above 200  
 Pounds. But I was not then a Slave to Fortune,  
 I loved the young Lady sincerely, and had the  
 Pleasure to find that my Addresses were not dis-  
 agreeable to her. In short, we agreed to make  
 ourselves happy in each other, and a Time for our  
 Marriage was fixed. Her 200 Pounds, joined to  
 about as much more, which I had in my elder  
 Brother's Hands, I knew was sufficient to set me  
 up in a tolerable Situation: But, a few Weeks be-  
 fore the Wedding-day arrived, happening to reflect  
 that our united Fortunes might not be sufficient to  
 guard against Contingencies, and that if I mis-  
 carried at first entring into Business, as we had no  
 Resource, we should both be ruined. As this Ob-  
 jection was of too great Moment to be slighted,  
 we both agreed to postpone our Marriage till  
 something should intervene to render it less for-  
 midable. Soon after, Miss and I had a slight  
 quarrel, and I thereupon suspended my Visits for  
 a Month extraordinary. Mean Time a neighbour-  
 ing Apothecary dying, I was advised to Attempt  
 his Widow, who had 5000 Pounds, besides a  
 good Shop, &c. and the whole unencumbered with  
 Children. To this I had two Objections of great  
 Weight; the first my Pre-engagement to the  
 young Lady; the second was the advanced Age,  
 and notorious bad Temper of the Widow: But  
 several concurring Accidents happening to lighten  
 the



the first, an Inclination for the Old Woman's Riches began to take Possession of my Heart, and at last Love, with all its tender kindred Passions was absolutely beaten out. In fine, I foolishly swallowed the gilded Pill of Ambition, without ever reflecting on the nauseous Ingredients which composed the inner Substance of it, and was married to the Widow, after a Courtship of two Months.

I was sincerely desirous of making the Old Woman as happy as possible, the Difference of our Age considered: For tho' I could not really love her, I resolved to treat her with all imaginable Respect, and diligently strove to please and gratify all her peevish, cross-grain'd Humours. But, in less than half a Year after we came together, I had sufficient Reason to repent what it was now too late to retrieve. My Wife, as I now discovered, had been Cook-maid to her first Husband's Master, and had unaccountably found Means to entice the Apprentice to marry her. Agreeable to the Meanness of her Profession, was her Birth and Education, not having been taught so much as to read; and, what still heightened this Misfortune, her depraved Understanding, and perverse Disposition, were invincible Obstacles to her Improvement. Hence she ever remained, as Nature formed her, a Slave to the Strength and Violence of her own unruly Passions; agitated eternally by the most suspicious and unsurmountable Jealousy; (which undoubtedly proceeded from Consciousness of her own Demerits) arbitrarily guided by her own gross Conceptions, and lavish-

ly profuse of the coarsest Language, especially when out of Humour. No wonder, then, if I, who am of a gay tho' sober Disposition, and have some Taste for the Elegancies of Life, should soon contract more than an Indifference for such a Wife.

Wives, either Old or Young, are ever sharp-sighted enough to discover the earliest and most hidden Symptoms of a Husband's Disregard. This I experienced to my Cost; for before I had dragg'd the Chain of *Hymen* three Months, my venerable Mate began to entertain me with Reproaches, Revilings, Scoldings, hard Names, &c. &c. Yet all my Fault was Want of Fondness for a Creature who made my Life a Burthen to me, and the holy State of Matrimony, a State of worse than *Egyptian* Bondage! Matters at length proceeded to that Extremity, that we parted Beds; the Reason of which take as follows. My Wife, tho' Sixty-five Years old, still preserved a lusty, warm, and vigorous Constitution, and had not the least aversion to the Pleasures of Youth. But as for me, my Habit of Body was weakly and cold, and the Fretting and Vexation which I daily endured, from the termagant Behaviour of my Wife, had worn me to a Skeleton. Hence it naturally followed, that I did not give unto such Conjugal Excesses, as some married Folks, who are better matched, possibly may; and, as it seems, my amiable Consort wished I should. This prompted her to charge me with wronging her in that Article which no Woman can suffer with Patience, declaring "that my Affections were  
" placed

“ placed upon some former Mistress whom I  
 “ still kept, or some new one: Adding, that  
 “ her dear first Husband never gave her the  
 “ least Cause of Complaint on this Head, and  
 “ that if I did not do her Justice, she would expose  
 “ me to all her Acquaintance, Relations, &c.”  
 Tho’ conscious of my Innocence with respect to  
 this Charge, yet, as I knew she was capable of  
 inventing and asserting any Falshood, I confess  
 her Threats had such an Effect upon me, that,  
 rather than provoke her to do any thing prejudi-  
 cial to my Reputation, I constrained myself to  
 endure her too frequent Embraces, and did her  
 Justice, as she called it, till a Surfeit ensued ; after  
 which, all Advances on my Part ceased, being  
 glad to lie by, waiting her Motions. At the End  
 of two Months more, finding my Aversion to the  
 Drudgery increase to such a Degree, that to con-  
 sent to her was little better than Suicide, I fell  
 into *statu quo*, and turned my Complaisance to-  
 wards her into Compassion for myself. This again  
 roused her Resentment, and a terrible Quarrel  
 ensued ; when I had the Courage to assure her,  
 “ That since she was not content with my best  
 “ Endeavours, I would have nothing further to  
 “ do with so ungrateful a Creature, but for the  
 “ future should chuse to lie alone.” This de-  
 sperate Resolution mortified her not a little, as it  
 could not fail of exposing the Affair to the Ser-  
 vants, and indeed I did not like that myself ; how-  
 ever I persisted in it, and we never after lay to-  
 gether. But this Piece of Revenge was but a  
 small Relief, for she had still a thousand Plagues  
 in

in Store for me, and now tormented me with reiterated Fury. However, I made shift to endure all her monstrous Behaviour, in daily Hopes that Death would rid me of her. My Friends in general pitied me, some laughed at, and others despised me. The only tolerable Moments which I passed, were those spent in my Business without Doors; but even these I was forced to abridge, to prevent my Wife from greeting me on my Return with whole Volumes of such mad Expressions, as the gentle Reader would be at a Loss to comprehend, without being let into her whole Character.

Often did I lament my Infidelity to the young Lady above-mentioned; wishing I had run all Hazards with that amiable Creature, rather than have left her for such a Monster as the Widow. 'Tis true I had great Business, and great Profits arose from it, but neither produced me any Satisfaction, except what I had in Prospect, in Case of the Old Woman's Death; but even this distant View was frequently cut off by my Apprehensions of her out-living me.

Many Times have I said to myself, " Alas!  
 " why did I not continue single to this Day, or  
 " rather, Why did I not perform my Engagements  
 " to the dear Miss ———, whose little Fortune,  
 " joined to mine, and with my honest Industry,  
 " Heaven might have blessed with more than  
 " a ten-fold Increase? Or if we had never at-  
 " tained to that Abundance which few have the  
 " Ability to make a rational Use of, yet our Hap-  
 " piness in each other would have amply com-  
 " pensated



“ pensated for all other Deficiencies: I might  
 “ have enjoyed ten thousand Times more Sa-  
 “ tisfaction with only a moderate Competency,  
 “ than I now can with all my dear-bought Wealth  
 “ about me.” Such Soliloquies as these I often  
 silently repeated, till at last, in the 17th Year of  
 my Affliction, a fortunate Fit of the Apoplexy  
 rid me of my Wife, and all my Troubles to-  
 gether.

An Acquaintance of mine who married an  
 elderly Woman, who kept a Shop not far from  
*Leadenball-street*, and which they both still keep,  
 is even in a worse Case than mine; and with  
 Tears, often complains to his Friends, of her  
 unsatiable Propensity to Fruition. Had this  
 good Body been young or handsome, if Modesty  
 had not restrained her, she might have found Fel-  
 lows enough to do her Drudgery; but, ugly,  
 covetous, ill-natured, and nauseously impudent as  
 she is, I believe no Man besides her Husband  
 ever touches her. As for her Husband, neither  
 influenced by Love, nor the Fear of Blows, of  
 which she gives him not a few, nor the grave  
 Lectures she reads him, can prevail on the poor  
 Man to do more than he is able. However, he  
 does all he can, and labours Night and Day to  
 keep her quiet; to the no small Detriment of his  
 now feeble Carcase. I once knew him a sprightly  
 Youth: Whilst a Batchelor, he was thought to be  
 much addicted to wenching; and would doubtless  
 have been still Man enough for any reasonable  
 Woman: But, at present he languishes, laments,  
 does Family-Duty when called upon, and carries  
 Death

Death and Despair in his Countenance! If ever he fails to obey the Summons to the Field of *Venus*, hard Words, worse Looks, and the Cudgel are his Doom, for Madam is as expert in the Field of *Mars*, as in Feats of Love; nor will or dares the poor Fellow make the least Resistance: But to what Purpose he thus practiseth the Doctrine of Passive-Obedience I know not.

A well known old Lady in St. *James's* Square, having buried four Husbands, married, for the fifth, the Brother of the present Lord \*\*\*\*, but the young Gentleman only despises and hates her for that very Action. He had 50,000 *l.* with her, 45 of which he would freely give (at least he hath often said so) to see her laid in the Grave, that he might have a House of his own to go in and out of when he pleased: A Liberty which his Wife will not allow him to take with Impunity. She knows he cannot love her, therefore suspects that whenever he goes out, 'tis only to squander away the Fortune she brought him, on Women that are more agreeable to his Taste. This is the Foundation of Differences betwixt them, too shocking to relate, especially of People of their Rank. Indeed I am weary of the ungrateful Employment, else could I fill a large Folio Volume, with Instances of the deplorable Effects of such unnatural Alliances. Not, as I have before intimated, but that now and then an Instance may appear, quite the Reverse of what I have exhibited; but such are like Comets, and when seen excite the Amazement of all Spectators.

Since

Since then there is so much Hazard, so much Danger attending the Conjunction of the Youth of our Sex, with the Aged and Widows of the other, let every wise, honest, and religious Man, act up to the Dignity of his Principles: Let the Cases I have cited, be a Warning to such, that they may not, like me, have the Mortification of reflecting upon their own Conduct with the greater Detestation, for its having been directly contrary to their own Principles. He that would acquire a large Fortune, let him apply himself to Business. He that is inclined to marry, let him first consult his Heart, then his Pocket, and if it can be so, let both be satisfied; if not, rather take any young uncorrupted Virgin, at least one so denominated, though not worth a Farthing, than a Widow, or old Woman of any Kind, though bending more under the Weight of their Riches than Years. The first you may love, and if you have a Fortune of your own, you may both be happy; if you have nothing, be industrious, merit the Protection of Heaven, and doubtless you will acquire its Blessings. The latter, 'tis a hundred to one, that you never can love, I mean not with that Delicacy and Tenderness, with which a Wife ought to be loved, even though she be exempt from those Disqualifications some of which I have pointed out. But the Hazard is great; not one in fifty of them proves worthy of a good Husband: Which is evident from the many thousand honest good-natured Fellows, who are at this Time groaning under the Variety of Misery, which ever attends,

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those

those who marry from any other Motive than that of pure, natural, spontaneous Love. A Love which rarely, if ever is excited in the Breast of a young Man, by a Widow, or old Woman in general; unless, as I have already admitted, the Man be grossly insensible, or the Woman extraordinarily accomplished.

They may not, like many, be reflecting upon their own Conduct with the greatest Detestation, nor as having been directly contrary to their own Principles. He that would acquire a large Fortune, let him apply himself to Business. He that is inclined to marry, let him first consult his Heart, then his Pocket, and if it can be so, let both be satisfied; if not, better take any other method than to marry, at least one to whom you are not well acquainted.

**F I N I S**

Nothing, than a Widow, or old Woman of any kind, though bearing more under the Weight of their Riches than Years. The first you may love, and if you have a Fortune of your own, you may both be happy; if you have nothing, be industrious, merit the Protection of Heaven, and doubtless you will acquire it. The last I never can love, as a man, and I never can be loved, even though the best of men should be your Disputant.



mons sense of the world is great; and in fifty of them the Hazard is great; and in fifty of them it proves worthy of a good Husband: Which is evident from the good and honest good natured Fellows, who are at this Time growing under the Variety of Misery, which ever attends those

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